

Egocentric

by AvidAuthor

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Summary: For the first time in his life, Zeno is selfish. AU, oneshot

Egocentric

Author's Note: A rare pairing, but a sweet one nonetheless. I enjoyed writing them together, so this couple may pop up again in the future. For now, enjoy this oneshot.

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><p>When Zeno came across a short haired girl, bound up and bloody, he was understandably horrified. So he held his hand over her mouth so that the bandits that held her captive wouldn't hear her scream, and untied the rope. Unfortunately for both of them, she was unconscious, and Zeno wasn't exactly the strongest man on the planet. So, stepping over each sleeping bandit gingerly, he snatched the reins of one of their horses. He led it over to the pink haired girl, and then he turned to it.</p>

"Now horse," he whispered sternly. "You are going to lie down so that Zeno can get her up onto your back, okay?" The horse blew a puff of air into Zeno's face, and then did as it was told. Zeno grinned, and then proceeded to drag the girl onto its back. Once she was secure, he scrambled up as well. The horse stood, and in doing so jostled the girl. Her eyes snapped open, and she gasped, nice and loud. Bandits popped up all around them, growling curses.

"Oh dear," Zeno said. He leaned forward so that the girl wouldn't fall off, and then gently kicked the horse in its side. It started running, though perhaps less from Zeno's kick and more from the swords the bandits were holding. Zeno laughed joyfully. After sticking his tongue out at the bandits, He looked down at the bemused girl under him.

"What's your name?" He asked. She blinked wide, pretty eyes, and then said in a frightened whisper, "Yona."

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><p>Now, let's get something straight: Zeno did not ride horses very often. In all honestly, it was probably just some amazingly well timed luck that had allowed them to mount the horse in the first place. And as the horse attempted to toss them off for the third time, Zeno realized that bit of luck was most likely running out.</p>

The horse whinnied angrily, and then bucked one last time. Zeno knew that he couldn't hold both himself and Yona on, so he wrapped his arms around her and let go of the horse. They landed quite violently, and Zeno winced as he hit his head. He kept his eyes closed, and was surprised to feel a cold hand on his forehead. He opened his eyes, and saw Yona's concerned gaze.

"Are you okay?" She asked worriedly. Zeno sat up, and then gave her a grin.

"Don't worry miss," he said cheerfully. "Zeno is a dragon, so he heals fast." She took in his messy blonde hair and pale skin. She made a face.

"You don't look very much like a dragon," Yona said, pulling a twig from his hair.

"Hey," he said playfully. "How rude!" He bumped his shoulder against hers, and then blinked in surprise when she winced and pulled away. She glanced at his expression, and to Zeno's horror, her lip trembled.

"I'm sorry," she whispered. "It's just that those bandits did some terrible things to me, and—" She played with the fabric of her skirt as she spoke, and Zeno noticed the fact that it was ripped up to her thigh.

"Don't worry about it," Zeno said gently, burying his anger for another time. "Zeno understands." Yona wiped the tears off her face, and then smiled.

"So," she said as brightly as she could. "Who are you?" he made a face.

"Zeno never told you?" He asked. Yona shook her head, and he smiled. "Zeno wanders, and helps those in need. He will not harm you." Yona grinned.

"You seem very kind," she said. Zeno blushed. They then proceeded to walk for a bit, and Zeno was pleased to see that Yona seemed a bit more comfortable. So when he saw her look longingly at a pond, he smiled and said, "Would you like to take a bath?"

she blushed and looked down at her filthy dress sadly. "I haven't had a bath since the bandits captured me, so I would like to," she said, then looked up. "If it isn't too much trouble." Zeno laughed and shook his head.

"Nonsense. Go right ahead. And don't worry 'bout being spied on. Zeno will guard you." She smiled, and then gave him a hesitant kiss on the cheek.

"Thank you," she said softly. Zeno smiled at her.

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><p>Zeno kept his eyes closed as he washed his face. He saw no reason to take a full bath; he'd just get dirty after anyway. He didn't blame Yona for wanting to wash herself off, though. He had a feeling that it wasn't just dirt and dust that she wanted to cleanse herself of. He straightened and shook the water out of his hair, then wiped his face off on his sleeve. Then he lay down on his back and looked dreamily upwards. It was dawn, his favorite time of day. He loved the look of the sky as day fought night for its place in the heavens. Zeno heard a cry of dismay from behind him and sat up, hands over eyes.</p>

"What's wrong?" He called.

"My dress!" Yona cried. "I washed it, and now I can see all the rips! I can't wear this!"

Zeno leaned forward, removing his hands from his still closed eyes.

"Hand it to Zeno," he called. "He can mend it." He heard splashing, then felt Yona place it in his hand. He spun so his back was to her and opened his eyes. He reached into one of his pockets, and pulled out a needle and thread. Threading the needle, he smiled.

"Zeno always brings stuff like this with him, since he is not in town much," he said cheerfully as he began stitching. He heard Yona gasp softly.

"Your stitches are so neat!" She said admiringly. "Sometimes father would ask me mend clothes. I always did horribly." As Zeno stitched and stitched, a question rose up in his mind.

"Zeno doesn't mean to pry," he said hesitatingly. "But may he ask how you got captured?" Yona was silent for a moment, and when she spoke, her voice was sad.

"I was to be married to a man named Tae-Jun." She said softly. "After me and my father fell onto hard times, he wished for me to be married to a man who could protect me. I was angry, so I cut my hair in hopes that he wouldn't want me."

Zeno stayed silent as she took a deep breath.

"He did. Me and Tae-Jun were going back to his village to be married, and we got separated. The bandits found me, and I suppose you know the rest." She finished with a sigh. After a moment, she asked, "what about you?" Zeno started to stitch faster.

"Zeno's wife got ill and died about a year ago," he said quietly. "So he decided to travel. He has been wandering around ever since. Sometimes Zeno gets lonely, though." After a moment of mournful silence, his voice went back to its normal cheerfulness.

"But never mind all that. You know, Zeno could bring you back to Tae-Jun if you'd like," He said. Then he smiled and held up the dress after cutting the tread with his dagger. Suddenly, arms grabbed him from behind, and his eyes widened as Yona embraced him from behind.

"Life as treated you so cruelly," she said tearfully. "Yet you are still so kind."

He closed his eyes.

"Zeno's wife was always cheerful, even when she was dying. He does not think she would wish for him to be sad and lonely because of her." Though his words were sad, his smile (albeit less bright than normal) was happy. He placed the dress in her hands, then stood, and waited for Yona to follow.

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><p>As they walked, Zeno showed Yona all the roots and berries that were safe to eat. As he tossed berries into his mouth, he glanced over at Yona. She was holding a recently cleaned root in her hand. Her eyes were sad and worried, and Zeno took a tentative step closer.</p>

"Is something wrong?" He asked. Yona pushed a short lock of dark pink hair out of her face.

"What if Tae-Jun doesn't want me to come back?" She said softly. "What if he's found someone better?" Zeno gently put his hand in hers, and then smiled.

"Zeno doesn't know how he could do that," he said with a grin. "He thinks that you might be the prettiest girl alive." Yona blushed and ducked her head, and Zeno was glad to see her smile had returned. As they continued walking, Yona didn't frown once. She even smiled up at the sky when it began to get dark.

"I love the stars," she said happily. "No matter what happens, they always keep shining."

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><p>They began to grow weary, so Zeno looked around. Usually Zeno just slept in trees, but Yona wasn't as limber as he was, so he found a nice little cave, free of animals.</p>

"There is a town nearby," he said as he began starting a fire outside the mouth of the cave. "Tae-Jun is bound to be waiting for you there." To his distress, Zeno found that he didn't sound quite as cheerful as he ought to be. Once he got the fire started, he wrapped Yona in a blanket from his pocket.

"Stay right here," he said sternly. "It's easy to get lost when it's this dark. Zeno is going to hunt." Though it made him uneasy, he left Yona by the fire with his dagger. Armed with nothing but the knife he usually used for preparing food, he took down a small deer. With it thrown over his shoulder, he was on his way back to the camp when he heard a small squeal of pain, then a gasp. Dropping the deer, he ran

ahead. Knife brandished, Zeno prepared himself to fight.

When he reached the clearing, he saw Yona standing over the corpse of a small rabbit, his dagger through it, praying. He smiled softly, then went back to retrieve the deer. When he stepped into the clearing again, Yona had moved it near the fire. She pointed to the rabbit.

"Look!" She said excitedly. "I got a rabbit!" He nodded, said his congratulations, and then went about skinning and cooking the meat. Once it was cooked, and they had both eaten their fill, Yona took the blanket off her shoulders, and tried to hand it back to him.

"No, you have it," He said, handing it back. "You sleep in the cave with the blanket, and Zeno will sleep out by the fire." She frowned at him.

"This is your blanket," she said stubbornly. "You should have it." In the end, Yona took it and went into the cave. She then waited for Zeno to fall asleep, then snuck out and covered him with it. He awoke a few minutes later, and went and put it back onto a slumbering Yona. They went back and forth like this, until they both fell asleep.

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><p>Zeno awoke with his face buried in Yona's hair. In the end, they had agreed on a compromise, and had both shared the blanket. Zeno sat up, and then smoothed her hair back down. It was lovely hair, short and the color of dawn. It also smelled nice, a fact that occurred to him once he was free from its tangles.</p>

Zeno looked down at Yona for one long moment before he realized that he was in love with her. Of course, Zeno was well aware that she had fiancÃ©. Today, they would reach the town that most likely held said fiancÃ©. But the heart wants what it wants, and Zeno's heart wanted her. So he lay back down next to her. He didn't hold her or anything like that. He just lay next to her, a smile on his face to hide the sorrow. By the time that she woke up, all this love would be locked up in his heart, where it would hurt only him.

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><p>They reached the town with no problems, and Zeno held Yona's hand as she looked around nervously. People were staring, which was to be expected. They didn't exactly fit in. Suddenly, there was a tearful gasp from Yona, and she let go of his hand. That little action hurt Zeno bitterly. But he had been around long enough to know how to hide his feelings. The man that Yona ran to was skinny. Zeno noticed he had cruel eyes. The man who must have been Tae-Jun went in to kiss her, but Yona turned before he could do so.</p>

"Zeno," she called. "Is it all right if I spend the day with Tae-Jun?" Zeno nodded and gave her a thumbs up.

"Go ahead," he called back, smiling brightly. "Zeno needs to stock up on supplies!" With that, he spun on his heel. He walked for a while, until he was sure that Yona had been swept away by Hak. Then the smile fell from his face, and he started crying. People stared at the strange boy with the messy blonde hair who wept as he walked, and hurried away from him. And just like that, Zeno was all alone

again.

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><p>Zeno bought some things, then, once he had run out of money, sat himself down on some crate in an alley. He held his dagger in his hand, a quiet warning to would be thieves that he would not go down easily. He had known that Yona would want to go back with Tae-Jun, but there had been some small, selfish part of him that had hoped she didn't. Zeno wasn't selfish very often. When he prayed, other people were the ones who occupied his thoughts, not himself. He had wished, just this once, that maybe...<p>

"Zeno! There you are!" Yona cried. She put her hands on her knees and bent over, breathing heavily. "I've been looking all over for you!" Zeno made room for her on the crate and she sat down. He looked at her in confusion.

"Zeno thought that you were going to spend the rest of the day with Tae-Jun," he said softly. Yona pulled her knees up to her chest and wrapped her arms around her legs.

"The first thing Tae-Jun did once you went away was try to kiss me," she said quietly. "And I got to thinking that he isn't that different from those bandits. I also realized that I didn't love him. I don't think I ever did." As Zeno stared, Yona smiled and entwined her fingers with his.

"Do you think that I could travel with you for a while?" She asked. Zeno felt his eyes brim with tears, and he embraced her.

"Yes," he whispered. "Of course." They stood, and he wiped at his eyes. He turned to smile at her, when he felt something pierce his heart. He looked down at the tip of a sword. He looked back up at Yona. Her eyes were wide with shock. Then he was on the ground, with his vision getting blurry. And then-

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><p>"Hello, Zeno." The voice who spoke his name was not just one voice, but many. It was the voices of all the people he had ever loved, and all the people he had ever hated. He raised his head. The voice was everywhere. Zeno knew where he was, of course.<p>

"Why?" He asked. The voice sighed.

"That man, full of jealousy, struck your heart. Your heart died. So you did as well," the voice whispered. "But you do not wish to be here." Zeno bowed his head.

"May Zeno go back?" He asked softly. "May he return to living?" Though the voice had no body, Zeno could almost see it smile.

"You were to live for eternity, child," The voice breathed. "Though your heart died, you still have many years to live. Is there someone, living, that you wish to latch onto? Who if they die, you would perish as well? And vice versa?" Zeno nodded, closing his eyes and thinking of Yona.

"You are very selfish, child." The voice said with a laugh. And with

that-

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><p>Zeno's senses came back in full force, and he gasped. Yona, bright, beautiful Yona, stared at him in disbelief. Voice trembling, she whispered, "what happened?" Zeno reached up to wipe her tears away.</p>

"Zeno was selfish," he said with a smile. Yona smiled back. Suddenly, she leaned forward; then, eyes closed, and kissed him. Zeno pulled away, and then looked at her.

"Is it okay if you spend the rest of your life with Zeno?" He asked softly. Yona embraced him.

"I would spend eternity with you," she whispered. Zeno grinned. "That's good, because it would have been pretty bad if you had said no," he said with laugh.

Yona hugged him tighter.

"Zeno?"

"Yeah?"

"Please don't spoil the moment."

"Sorry."

* * *

><p>Another Author's Note: The way Zeno speaks is strange. While he usually speaks in third person, sometimes he will slip back into his original first person. I decided that for this story, he would speak entirely in third person. Thanks for reading!

End
file.